Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-26 and 28-32 are pending in the application, with 1, 7, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, and 32 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 15, 18, 19, and 20 are sought to be amended. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 4-14, 17, 23-26, and 28-32 are allowed and claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 15-16, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bolosky et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,118,790 (Bolosky) in view of Soirinsuo et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,084,855 (Soirinsuo). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Bolosky describes an audio station including a several subsystems and a

controller that is responsible for scheduling transmission of audio sequences to subscribers. (Bolosky, col. 4, lines 13-16). Each subsystem includes a pair of storage devices and a microprocessor that is responsible for cooperating with the controller to transmit the data for audio sequences stored on the storage devices. (Bolosky, col. 4, lines 26-38). In Bolosky, when a request to listen to a stored audio sequence is received, the audio server system schedules transmission of the blocks of data from the storage devices storing the blocks of data using a column of time slots. Each column includes a number of time slots (bandwidth unit) in a sequence that repeats. When a free bandwidth unit is found, the blocks of data of the audio sequence are transmitted. (Boloksky, col. 6, line 61 - col. 8, line 63). Thus, Bolosky describes transmission scheduling for blocks of data in an audio stream. Bolosky does not teach packet switching the internal audio streams.

Soirinsuo describes a method and apparatus "for providing fair traffic scheduling of L2 connections based on the number of IP flows and a priority coefficient for flow groups in the L2 connection." (Soirinsuo, Abstract). In Soirinsuo, a network element processor includes a monitor for identifying the number of IP flows for each connection, a prioritizer for assigning a priority coefficient for each connection, and a scheduler for scheduling the IP flows according to the priority coefficient. (Soirinsuo, col. 10, lines 32-47). The network element does not include a packet switch for switching internal audio streams.

Thus, neither Bolosky nor Soirinsuo teach or suggest a "method for noiselessly switching audio provided on an egress audio channel over a network, comprising: (a) generating a first audio stream of egress packets for the egress audio channel, wherein each egress packet includes a payload carrying audio and control header information; (b)

switching in a packet switch said first audio stream to a first network interface controller associated with the egress audio channel; (c) generating a second audio stream of egress packets, wherein each egress packet includes a payload carrying audio and control header information; (d) switching in said packet switch said second audio stream of egress packets for delivery to the first network interface controller associated with the egress audio channel; and (e) evaluating the relative priority of the first and second audio streams based on priority information in the control header information of the egress packets to determine which of the first and second audio streams is a higher priority audio stream to transmit on the egress audio channel over the network", as recited in amended claim 1.

Furthermore, neither Bolosky nor Soirinsuo teach or suggest " a packet switch coupled to said first and second internal audio sources" and "said packet switch switches said first internal audio stream of egress packets and said second internal audio stream of egress packets for delivery to said network interface controller", as recited in amended claims 15, 18, 19, and 20.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the combination of Bolosky and Soirinsuo fails to teach or suggest all the features of amended claim 1, 15, 18, 19, and 20. For at least these reasons, and further in view of their own features, claims 2-3 and 5-6 which depend from claim 1 and claims 16, 21, and 22 which depend from claim 15 are patentable over Bolosky and Soirinsuo, either alone or in combination. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the ground of rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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